

studyexpose

environmental working group
annual report 2004

pollution **poison**

“[D]isturbing numbers:
A study of 20 first-time
mothers by the Environmental
Working Group found
considerably higher PBDE
levels in U.S. women than
those recorded in Sweden.”

The Wall Street Journal, 1/20/04

2004 EWG “Toxics and Human Health” research

Cosmetics

Most Americans use personal care products every day, but neither government nor industry adequately tests them for safety. EWG found that 89% of ingredients in personal care products have not been tested, and our searchable database inspired citizens to press the FDA for change.

Rocket Fuel in Milk

After EWG research showed that over 20 million people had a toxic rocket fuel chemical in their tap water, we tested and found alarming levels in California lettuce and milk. EWG is leading the push for cleanup and regulation of this chemical, which has been found in more than 20 states.

Flame Retardants

Toxic flame retardants (PBDEs) were little-known until EWG’s groundbreaking research on fish and breast milk. In response, industry quickly phased out two chemicals and legislatures from Maine to California banned them. However, our follow-up report documenting high levels of flame retardants in household dust shows that more of these chemicals must be banned to protect Americans from exposure linked to neurological damage.

Teflon Chemicals

In a David vs. Goliath battle, EWG is battling DuPont over the health risks of Teflon chemicals. These super-persistent, unregulated compounds are found in over 95% of Americans’ blood. EWG’s research forced the EPA to sue DuPont for covering up evidence of Teflon’s health risks.

Mercury in Children

Building on five years of research, an EWG investigation suggested that autistic children are more susceptible to mercury and other toxins. These findings raised concerns about children’s exposure to mercury, which is toxic to the developing nervous system.

Polluting industries have spent millions trying to convince the public and policymakers not to worry about “low-level” contamination of water, air, food and land with toxic chemicals and industrial wastes. For 12 years, EWG research has played a leading role in shifting the terms of the debate to explain how all Americans, and our children in particular, are bombarded with a vast array of industrial chemicals and pollutants. Many are slow-acting, long-term poisons linked to cancer, nervous system damage and other health problems.

aid subsidy

“Every subsidy payment in the country can be found on a Web site put together by the Environmental Working Group, which advocates an overhaul of the farm payment system. The site has become a must-read for farmers...”

The New York Times, 1/4/05

2004 EWG “Subsidy Shifting” research

Farm Subsidy Database

No EWG project has matched the Farm Subsidy Database in media or policy impact. We posted online every payment made by the federal government to farmers, and found that 72% of taxpayers’ money goes to 10% of the biggest farmers. Two-thirds of all farmers don’t receive any funds because they grow the “wrong” crops. EWG’s advocacy resulted in a 80% increase in conservation program funding.

Global Cotton Production

Cotton is king of subsidy-dependent American agribusinesses, but that may change. EWG’s analysis of the outrageous double-subsidy system for U.S. cotton farmers was the basis of a landmark 2003 WTO challenge. The cotton program was ruled illegal, throwing into question the entire U.S. crop subsidy system.

Black Farmers

In partnership with the National Black Farmers Association, EWG called attention to the injustice of 81,000 black farmers who were denied compensation by USDA. The agency admitted to civil rights abuses, but most of the settlement has still not been paid.

Tobacco Buyout

EWG analyzed a congressional proposal to buy out Depression-era tobacco quotas. We revealed that the buyout would create hundreds of instant millionaires, with 10% of recipients getting two-thirds of the funds. Our findings inspired Congress to force the tobacco industry — not taxpayers — to foot the bill.

Water Subsidies in California

In a groundbreaking new area of subsidy research, EWG uncovered and named all recipients of federal water subsidies in California. Our research confirms that multi-million dollar agribusiness operations — not the small family farmers federal projects were originally intended to benefit — are reaping a windfall from taxpayer-subsidized water.

EWG’s Farm Subsidy Database single-handedly reframed the debate on U.S. agriculture policy. Confronted with the facts, the public and policymakers began to see government payments not as aid to family farmers, but instead as subsidies to large agribusinesses and absentee landlords.

access excess

“The results put dents in claims...[that] opening up more federal land to oil and gas production would help ease the country’s reliance on foreign supplies.”

Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 8/25/04

2004 EWG research on public lands: “Who Owns the West?”

Mining

Who wins when mine pits are dug on the public’s Western lands? EWG’s innovative work reveals the surprising answer: Winners include big companies from Russia, Canada, Mexico, Australia and more, who rent our Western natural treasures for as little as 84 cents an acre, take home gold and silver profits, and return nothing to our federal government. Turn to EWG to see how a mining law written in 1872 legalizes foreign-owned, mile-wide open pits on U.S. public lands, and sticks Americans with big mine cleanup bills.

Oil and Gas

Want an America that’s energy independent? EWG’s groundbreaking studies prove that drilling America’s last, best wild places isn’t the answer. We compiled pumping and land leasing data for every company, land tract and well on Western public lands, and showed that despite the government’s offering of an astounding third of the West for drilling in the last 20 years, the oil and gas industry has given us back less than two months of oil and not even eight months of natural gas — hardly a bargain, and leaving us increasingly reliant on foreign energy. EWG’s answer? It’s time for investments in clean technologies of the future.

Wielding 12.5 Gigabytes of government data on Western mining and drilling, EWG is fighting exploding government giveaways of Western natural treasures to industry. Within 20 years, every Western national park, forest and wilderness area will be surrounded by oil, gas and mining lands that sometimes produce just days’ worth of oil and gas, or gold and silver that profit foreign-owned companies. Our work shows it’s time for the public to reclaim the West.

environmental **changing** working group **the debate**

For 12 years, EWG's research has shifted how policymakers, reporters and the public view environmental issues. Our mission? Using the power of information to protect the environment and human health. We're not satisfied with environmental awareness — we aim for intensity about environmental problems and solutions.

EWG releases and publicizes a daunting array of "policy-rattling research" (National Journal, January 2002) on a \$3 million budget. Our system produces results exponentially greater than those of groups many times our size. EWG's work falls into two categories:

Toxics and Human Health

EWG's research has fundamentally reframed the debate about how toxic chemicals affect human health. The underlying theme of all of EWG's work is that our system of public health protections should safeguard the most vulnerable members of society — children. Unfortunately, the gaping holes in the U.S. public health safety net will not be fixed until the government sets health standards that protect children, not just adults.

Subsidy Shifting

After releasing the influential Farm Subsidy Database, based on hundreds of millions of records, EWG began to investigate other government subsidy programs. Our research has extended to water subsidies in California, federal highway-building expenditures, and mining, oil and gas extraction on public lands. EWG's goal is to shift government spending away from wasteful practices and instead have taxpayers invest in sustainable solutions that reverse damage and protect wild places.



Letter from the President

Just when you're sure you've seen it all, the carnival of influence peddling that burlesques democracy in Washington these days will serve up something capable of dropping the staunchest cynic's jaw.

Consider this federal research proposal: recruit low-income parents who make heavy use of pesticides around the home, and offer them a thousand bucks to follow their own kids around with a video camera for several months, recording — instead of reducing — their chemical exposures. *America's Most Shameful Home Videos* in the making? We thought so. But the good folks over at the American Chemistry Council — they called themselves the Chemical Manufacturers Association before their makeover — discerned so much profit in the enterprise that they offered a cool \$2 million (two-thirds of EWG's yearly budget) to become the government's 'partner' in the project. A grateful \$7 billion agency jumped at the money.

Then there's the one about several hundred communities, along with the State of New Hampshire, that screwed up the courage to take a group of very big Texas oil companies to court for knowingly ruining tap water supplies with a foul-smelling gasoline additive called MTBE. Their courage turned into sputtering disbelief when leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives reacted by ramming through a bill to *outlaw the lawsuits retroactively*, putting consumers instead of polluters on the hook for billions in cleanup costs.

It happens that these were two of the many environmental brawls that the Environmental Working Group jumped into the middle of in 2004. Once we were in, the debate began to change. EWG's trademark combination of expert knowledge, original investigation, and dynamic media outreach brought the disreputable industry-underwritten film festival on toxic chemicals and kids to an embarrassed halt. And that outrageous polluter immunity bill has been blocked — so far — largely on the strength of EWG's expose of damning, internal MTBE industry documents, which prove their culpability as polluters, and an inceptive EWG analysis of tap water data that localized for reporters and politicians a widespread and growing MTBE contamination problem.

Is EWG the one organization that lobbyists for chemical companies, Big Oil, and other powerful industry interests most dread to see showing up in a high-stakes environmental policy fight? I can't say for certain. But I believe that's our reputation, and I guarantee it's one of our ambitions.

We depend on friends like you to keep us in the fray.

EWG Finances at a Glance, 2004

Revenues 2004

Foundations	2,220,900	79%
Individuals	311,494	11%
Program-consulting	221,733	8%
Program-arsenic kits	36,297	1%
Corporate	12,635	<1%
Interest & Misc	8,344	<1%
Total revenues	\$2,780,478	100%

Expenses 2004

Toxics & Health	1,130,717	46%
Water & Agriculture	423,407	17%
Natural Resources	372,011	15%
Transportation	44,054	2%
Total Programming	\$1,970,189	80%
Management & Gen	320,615	13%
Fundraising	156,636	7%
Total expenses	\$2,447,440	100%

EWG appreciates the support of private foundations, individuals and progressive businesses to remain an independent watchdog. We are especially grateful to our most generous donors:

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